DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 146 EC 300 905

TITLE	Introducing High School Students to Careers in Special Education: An Activities Guide.
INSTITUTION	National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Washington, D.C.; National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, Reston, VA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Sep 91
CONTRACT	H030E00001-90A
NOTE	24p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Awareness; Career Education; Career Exploration; *Disabilities; High Schools; *High School Students; *Learning Activities; *Special Education; Special Education Teachers; *Teacher Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS	*Council for Exceptional Children

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guide is to assist chapters of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and other groups of special educators to plan, design, and implement community activities that increase awareness of high school students about career possibilities within special education and provide information about how to pursue a career in the special education profession. The guide describes activities designed to introduce students to the rewards of working with children who have disabilities and to provide information about the special education profession. Suggested activities include: career awareness day, work days, teacher preparation awareness day, field trips, recreation programs involving exceptional individuals, attending a dance or other social event with students with disabilities, serving as student aides, providing child care, companion or respite services, the buddy system, and using media. The second section of the guide offers descriptions of activities carried out by CEC high school clubs, including: future teacher institute, Young Educators Society, magnet schools, future educators clubs, peer tutoring, Best Buddies of America, and a peer helping special friendship club. Appendices describe the use of poster sessions and video in career awareness activities. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED342146

Introducing High School Students to Careers in Special Education

An Activities Guide

Developed by

NASDSE Policy Center

PROFESSIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
THE NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE
Professions Information Center
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589

CEC Information Center

EC305205

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This document was prepared pursuant to Cooperative Agreement No. H030E00001-90A with the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Agencies undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express their judgment freely in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Department of Education position or policy.

Contents

Preface iii
Introduction 1

Suggested Activities
Career Awareness Day 2
Work Days 3
Teacher Preparation Awareness Day 6
Field Trips 7
Recreation Program 8
Attending a Dance or Other Social Event 9
Student Aides 10
Child Care, Companion, or Respite Services 11
Buddy System 12
Using Media 13

Examples of High School Club Activities
Future Teacher Institute 14
Young Educators Society 14
Magnet Schools 14
Future Educators Clubs 15
Student Recruitment 15
Peer Tutoring 15
Best Buddies of America, Inc. 16
Special Friendship Club 16

Appendices
Poster Session Guidelines 18
Use of Video 19

Preface

This draft guide (version 2), **Introducing High School Students to Careers in Special Education**, was developed by The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education (NCPSE) (Professions Clearinghouse), with advice and cooperation from The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). We appreciate your commitment to the CEC-coordinated field test of the guide and your willingness to assist us in making improvements so that it will be a useful tool for your colleagues throughout the country. Input from your experiences working with this material will be used in our final revision of the guide, which will be published in time for dissemination at the 70th CEC Annual Convention in Baltimore, April 13-17, 1992.

This guide, and a series of companion guides, are targeted at increasing the ability of practicing professionals to conduct constructive recruitment and retention activities. It is anticipated that additional guides will be developed and field-tested.

The NCPSE, operated collaboratively by The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDE) and CEC, is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The Professions Clearinghouse is designed to encourage students to seek careers, and professional personnel to seek employment, in the various fields related to the education of children and youth with disabilities through the following:

1. Collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on current and future national, regional, and state needs for special education and related services personnel. To meet this requirement, the Clearinghouse:
   (a) collects, validates, and provides ready access to information about the current need for personnel;
   (b) develops products and services designed to improve the relevance and accuracy of information on current and future needs; and
   (c) collects, analyzes, and disseminates information about factors that influence supply and demand (e.g., accreditation, policy, certification).
2. Analysis and dissemination of information concerning career opportunities in special education and related services, retention of qualified personnel, location of programs that prepare special education and related service professionals, and sources of financial assistance such as scholarships, stipends, and allowances.
3. Maintenance of networks among local and state educational agencies, professional associations, and institutions of higher education and the provision for information and services to facilitate those networks.

The Council for Exceptional Children is the international professional association of special educators who serve students with disabilities and those who are gifted. CEC and its state, provincial, and local units, and its divisions have undertaken a major organization-wide campaign on recruitment and retention. This guide is being used in conjunction with that campaign.

Appreciation is expressed to the CEC Professional Standards and Practice Standing Committee's Subcommittee on Recruitment and Retention and the CEC-NASDSE Joint Committee on Supply and Demand for their guidance and support.

Thank you for your assistance. We look forward to working with you during this development process.

Dr. Lynne Cook, Director
National Clearinghouse for Professions
in Special Education

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to assist CEC chapters and other groups to plan, design, and implement community activities that increase awareness of high school students about career possibilities within special education and provide information about how to pursue a career in the special education profession. The Guide is designed to introduce students to the rewards of working with other students who have disabilities and to provide information about the special education profession. The guide is based on several assumptions:

- Career choices are often based on experiences a person has had that relate to a particular career and from information gathered from professionals practicing in that field.
- Major efforts should be undertaken to provide high school students with career awareness experiences that might lead to a decision to choose a career in special education.
- The best recruiters of the next generation of special educators are practicing special education professionals.

Dramatic changes have occurred over the past two decades that assure children with disabilities the special education, related services, and early intervention they require to become productive and meaningful members of society. Over four million children from birth to twenty-one years of age are currently receiving these services. It is projected that the numbers will continue to grow over the next decade.

While the number of children needing special education has grown, the number of qualified special education professionals has not kept pace. The U.S. Department of Education has reported that in school year 1988-89, there was a shortage of almost 28,000 special education teachers. Projections suggest that the shortages will continue to increase. This potential crisis led a group of national associations, in testimony before the Congress of the United States, to declare:

> This nation has a serious shortage of qualified special education and related services professionals. Projections of both student and professional demographic data indicate that over the coming years the shortages will reach crisis proportion and seriously impede the ability to provide students with handicaps the special education and related services they are guaranteed under Federal law. (A Free Appropriate Education: But Who Will Provide It?, 1989, p. 1)

It is not too late nor beyond our means to avert this crisis. While a variety of strategies will be necessary, the early exposure of students to the rewards of working with special populations is an essential component.

Recruiting prospective special educators needs to start at the community level. Whether a teacher, related service provider, an administrator, or a member of the higher education community, you can do a lot to encourage high school students to consider becoming special educators. Who is in a better position than someone already in the field to tell students about the rewards and challenges of a profession in special education? Who else knows what it really takes to be a great special education professional?

Contributing to the future of our profession through recruitment of new professionals is a major responsibility. While informal efforts to encourage prospective special educators are valuable, steps can be undertaken to establish more formal recruitment mechanisms in your high schools. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with assistance in taking that next step to formalizing the recruitment of young people.

Introducing High School Students to Careers in Special Education: An Activities Guide exposes high school students to a potential career as a special educator. This guide does not propose a structure for delivering the activities; one such structure that is developing nationally is the CEC high school club. If you have a CEC or other high school club, you will find the activities in this guide helpful in planning the club's agenda. If you do not have a club, CEC Chapters and members may still carry out the activities.

If you would like information concerning the organization of high school clubs, two resources are available to assist you. The Department of Member Unit Services (DMUS) of CEC produces Organizing A High School Club, a packet for students and advisors who wish to begin a club for students interested in special education. To receive information, call or write Sheila Ficker, DMUS, CEC, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091-1589, 703/264-9483. In Ohio, Project Support is designed to make a positive difference in the quality of education for students with disabilities by using high school students as volunteers in special education. For more information, contact Sally Pisarchick, 14605 Granger Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137, 216/587-5966.

Finally, as you work with high school students, it is important to remember the following:

- Students want to feel that they are full participants in any activity.
- Students want to feel that their opinions are being heard and that they count.
- Students want to show what they are capable of doing and accomplishing.
- Students are looking for ways to demonstrate their developing independence.
- Students are looking for concrete ways to guide their future career decisions.
- Students are seeking the guidance and structure that is present in a well-planned group experience.

On the following pages you will find suggestions and implementation guidelines in convenient one-page formats for specific activities for high school students. The activities are only recommendations; in many cases you will want to tailor the activities to meet the specific needs of your group or create new activities, as appropriate.

Suggested Activities

Career Awareness Day

A Career Awareness Day is a time when special education professionals are invited to spend time with students, talking about their own careers and experiences in special education. The teachers may come from the school where the club is located or from other locations. An effort should be made to ask teachers to describe their role beyond what goes on in the classroom. Teachers could also be chosen to represent various exceptionalities (e.g., learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, visual impairments) or other specialists, (e.g., an early intervention resource teacher, adaptive physical education teacher, and vocational education teacher). Special education supervisors or administrators might complete the list.

****

Guidelines for Planning a Career Awareness Day

- Determine the students' interest in sponsoring the event.
- Determine the number of professionals who can comfortably be accommodated in one meeting.
- If the group is large enough, an alternative way to include multiple speakers is to sponsor a Poster Session. Each professional would be invited to display information about his/her role in special education and participants would spend the meeting time visiting each display. The event could be structured so that the group would visit each display together, or members of the group could be free to visit the display that interests them, personally interacting with the presenter. *Please see Appendix A for poster session guidelines.*
- Set the date and location of the meeting, presentation times, and estimated duration of the presentations, including questions and answers. Give the presenters some suggestions concerning their presentations: current positions in special education, what attracted them to the field, rewarding experiences, etc.
- Make a list of equipment, if any, each speaker might need for his/her presentation.
- Invite the presenters, making them aware of what is expected of them.
- Make arrangements for hospitality hosts and refreshments.

Work Days

A work day is an opportunity for members of a group to gather to work on areas of common interest to the group. Work days can provide excellent concrete experiences for students who are interested in the field of special education. A positive outcome of this activity is the chance to include everyone: students, professionals, parents, and other family members. For example, group members can paint, decorate, or otherwise brighten up a facility used by individuals with exceptionalities. A work day featuring a car wash or bake sale might be conducted to raise money which would be donated to purchase new equipment.

****

Guidelines for Coordinating a Work Day

- Determine the group's level of interest in sponsoring this activity.
- Brainstorm possibilities for a work day event.
- Select the two or three most popular possibilities.
- Contact the group's first choice to make final arrangements (date, times, etc.) concerning the work day if the work is to be accomplished on site by the group. Establish:
  - Access to the location.
  - What work is planned/desired.
  - How regular users of the site can help with the activity.
- Arrange transportation to the work day location.
- Obtain parental permission, if appropriate.
- Determine expenses to the group members, if any, and collect the funds.
- Learn the names of the exceptional students who will be participating in the work day; if possible, visit them before the scheduled event.
- Meet with your group before the scheduled work day to set guidelines for appropriate behavior and to reinforce the objectives of the trip; answer questions.
- Following the activity, discuss what was learned from the experience.
- If desired, make arrangements for another work day from the second choice on the list.

Teacher Preparation Awareness Day

A Teacher Preparation Awareness Day is an event to which college students who are enrolled in special education teacher preparation programs are invited to speak about their programs. They can also give their perspective of the education they are receiving and share their reasons for choosing special education as a career. Consider inviting teacher educators from local colleges or universities to discuss the program(s) offered at their respective school.

****

Guidelines for Planning a Teacher Preparation Awareness Day

- Determine the group's interest in sponsoring this event.
- Choose the number of students who can comfortably be accommodated in one meeting. (Some communities may have access to many students in special education teacher preparation programs, in which case a decision will have to be made whether it is necessary to sponsor a series of Teacher Preparation Awareness Days.)
- If the group is large enough, an alternative way to include multiple speakers is to sponsor a Poster Session. Each college student would be invited to display information about his/her program and participants would spend the meeting time visiting each display. Many departments on college campuses have such displays available. The event could be structured so that the group would visit each display together, or members could be free to visit the display that interests them, personally interacting with the presenter.
- Set the date and location of the meeting, speakers' times and estimated duration of presentation, including questions and answers.
- Make a list of equipment, if any, each speaker might need for his/her presentation.
- Invite the presenters, making them aware of what is expected of them.
- Make arrangements for hospitality hosts and refreshments.
- Discuss the feasibility of allowing members of the sponsoring group to bring a guest whom they feel might benefit from the meeting.
- Schedule a follow-up visit to a local (or nearby) college or university.

Field Trips

Field Trips are short excursions to locations relevant to a group's objectives or area of focus where students can interact with professionals. Examples of field trips for groups considering a career in special education include classrooms in both private and public schools, university laboratory schools, group homes, sheltered workshops, or other facilities where students may have an opportunity to interact with exceptional individuals and special educators at work.

****

Guidelines for Sponsoring Field Trips

- Determine the level of interest in participating in this event.
- Generate suggestions for possible field trip locations.
- Select three possible locations and vote to select priorities.
- Contact the selected locations to determine if the choices are viable ones.
- Contact the group's first choice to make final arrangements (date, times, etc.). Establish:
  - How much time is available to the visiting group.
  - How much and what kind of access to exceptional individuals is desirable and possible.
  - Arrange transportation to the location.
  - Obtain parental permission, if appropriate.
- Determine expenses to the group members, if any, and collect the funds.
- Meet with the group before the trip to set guidelines for appropriate behavior and to reinforce the objectives of the trip.
- Observe special educators at work; if possible have members of your group serve as student aides in the classroom.
- Following the trip, have a group discussion about what was learned.
- Make arrangements for the second choice on the list, etc., if desired.

Recreation Program

Recreation programs are often sponsored by local government agencies or organizations in an effort to provide opportunities for exceptional individuals to participate in recreational activities. For information, you can check the local telephone directory, the Special Olympics Committee in your area, or public service notices posted in the local library.

Some resources may be found under the following telephone (yellow pages) listings:

* State, County, or City/Town Government
  - Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation
  - Human Services Department
  - Social Services Department
* Public and Private Schools
* Physical Education and Recreation Programs
* Human and Social Services
* Camps
* Recreation Centers
* Disability Organizations

****

Guidelines for Working With a Recreation Program

- Determine the group's level of interest in this activity.
- Make a list of programs available in your community.
- Contact the available programs to determine if volunteers are needed.
- After volunteers have begun working in recreation programs, arrange for a time to share experiences.

Attending a Dance or Other Social Event

Attending a dance or other group social event gives students many opportunities for social interaction with students with disabilities. Even before the actual event occurs, the preparation activities provide opportunities for working together. Social event planners might appreciate willing volunteers to assist with the planning: e.g., suggestions for music selection, dance instruction, or help with decorations and refreshments.

****

Guidelines for Attending a Dance or Other Social Event

- Determine the group's level of interest in this activity.
- Make a list of the programs in your community who might sponsor a social event and determine what help is needed. Be prepared to:
  - Make decorations
  - Assist with refreshments
  - Assist with music or other entertainment
  - Help with clean-up activities
- If appropriate, volunteer to give dancing lessons or model other social behavior in advance of the event.

Student Aides

The use of student aides in an existing special education program is an excellent way for students to gain experience working with exceptional individuals. A student may be able to work as a teacher aide during their study hall period. If a work-study program is available, students aides could be placed in sheltered workshops, group homes, preschool programs, or child care centers where exceptional individuals are served.

****

Guidelines for Establishing and/or Participating in a Student Aide Program

- Determine the group's level of interest for sponsoring or participating in this activity.
- Determine the feasibility of various factors:
  - How would the aides be used?
  - What classes would be involved?
  - What expectations would be held for the students involved?
- Survey teachers who are most likely to be involved for their input relative to expectations for the student aides.
- Together with the teachers, prepare an outline of the program. Some considerations include:
  - The duration of the program—a semester or an entire school year?
  - The option to earn credit for the experiences.
  - Responsibility for tracking/reporting student absences.
  - Evaluation of students' performance.
- Obtain support of appropriate personnel for the program; this step will most likely require a detailed proposal for the activity.
- If the program is approved, determine teachers' needs for student help. Establish:
  - The expectations of individual teachers.
  - How much, and what kind of, access to exceptional individuals is desirable and possible for the student aides.
  - What kinds of behaviors are likely to be seen by the students and how should they should be prepared to respond.
- Schedule students' time.
- Meet periodically to share experiences or to discuss problems.

Child Care, Companion, or Respite Services

Volunteering to work as companions or babysitters for persons with disabilities is an excellent way for students to gain experience working with this population. It also provides an invaluable service to parents and other care-givers. Students may wish to participate in this activity informally and individually, or the group may develop a pool of potential sitters and distribute information of their services to parent groups, PTAs, churches, community centers, and other organizations.

****

Guidelines for Child Care, Companion, or Respite Services

- Assess the group's level of interest in providing this service.
- Some variables to consider for caregivers, whether acting individually or as part of the group:
  - Become certified in emergency care through Red Cross (or any other such agency) where training in general emergency procedures such as CPR are taught.
  - Investigate liability concerns, if necessary.
  - Distribute information considering the services offered, being careful to specify the individual's or group's limitations concerning the types of care and range of services which can be provided.
  - Establish a time to talk with parents or guardians before the day the services are desired to determine special needs or concerns for both parties.
- Develop a checklist which can be provided ahead of time, outlining all pertinent emergency information and giving telephone numbers where parents, guardians, or other family members may be reached.
- Meet periodically to share experiences or to discuss problems, if appropriate.

Buddy System

Using a buddy system is an excellent way to plan group activities with exceptional individuals. Its strength lies in allowing group members to pair with persons with disabilities on an individual basis, to develop friendships, and plan activities together just like any friends would. Exceptional individuals gain tremendously from this arrangement, often experiencing, for the first time, social relationships outside the immediate family unit.

****

Guidelines for Establishing a Buddy System

- Determine the group's level of interest in sponsoring this activity.
- Brainstorm the types of activities the buddies may plan together:
  - A trip to a local mall.
  - Sporting events.
  - A movie, either in a theater or rented from a video store.
  - A visit to the local zoo or museum.
  - Be a "telephone buddy".
  - Go on a bicycle ride, if appropriate, or just a walk.
  - Be a homework "helper" or peer tutor, if appropriate.
- Discuss transportation considerations.
- Obtain a list of potential "buddies" from schools and other sources in the community.
- Pair names with group members.
- Establish the kinds of possible behaviors which might be demonstrated by the buddies and discuss possible solutions.
- If activities are planned outside the person's immediate neighborhood:
  - Provide a detailed outline of the proposed activity, giving definite departure/arrival times and develop contingency plans in case they are needed.
  - Establish a time to talk with parents or other care-givers before the day of the activity to determine special needs or concerns they may have.
  - Develop a checklist which can be provided ahead of time, outlining all pertinent emergency information and giving telephone numbers where parents can be reached, etc.

Using Media

Use the power of media in your group's activities. With the increasing use and availability of media, access to VCRs, video cameras, and other equipment is now routine. In some instances, slide presentations are often enhanced by accompanying audio input. This activity would be beneficial to a group as a way to document activities and/or prepare presentations explaining the benefits of a potential career choice in special education.

****

Guidelines for Using Media

- Determine the group's level of interest in doing this activity.
- Determine the kinds of equipment that is available for use by the group.
- Brainstorm possibilities.
- If individuals with disabilities will help with this activity, obtain permission from parents/guardians and include them in script development, rehearsals, and the preparation of any stage props. In general,
  - Plan the activity
  - Determine what equipment will be needed
  - Assign roles
  - Brainstorm and write script; revise as needed
  - Rehearse
  - Plan and review media logistics
  - Have a "practice" final rehearsal
  - Go "final"
- Following the activity, discuss what was learned from the experience and options for other activities in this area.

Examples of High School Club Activities

Future Teacher Institute

The California State University-Dominguez Hills provided a special experience for 58 minority junior and senior high school students who indicated an interest in pursuing a career in education. Members of the group participated in an on-campus Saturday program designed to introduce them to the classroom of the future.

Two groups, approximately 30 minority students each, completed a ten-week program that included three weeks of preparation and seven weeks of teaching elementary students. Parents of 400 children applied for admission to the program, which was promoted as "academic enrichment for college-bound third to sixth graders."

The future teachers worked in cooperative teaching teams, using the campus classrooms, computer labs, video equipment, and biology labs. The future teachers were paid an hourly wage for their work as teachers in the program.

Two evaluations rated the experience as highly positive for all participants involved. All "teachers" in the first cycle wanted to continue in the program. Those indicating teaching as a potential career choice increased from 20 percent prior to the program to 70 percent following the experience. It is hoped that a follow-up study of the future teachers' choice of university major will reveal the long-term impact of the program. The parents of the children who were in the future teachers' classes also rated the program as highly beneficial to their children.

For more information, contact the College of Education, California State University-Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA 90747, 213/516-3519.

****

Young Educators Society

The Young Educators Society (YES) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin has been implemented in fifteen Milwaukee high schools through a joint effort with the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Public Schools. YES is an updated version of the clubs model developed by the Future Teachers of America.

The program functions as a recruitment vehicle to establish a pool of qualified students at the high school level who have expressed an interest in becoming future teachers. Members of YES are involved in a number of preservice teaching activities. These include tutoring within their school or in a neighboring school; attending lectures by university faculty working in the area of teacher preparation; and visiting classrooms at different grade levels, working with both the teachers and the students.

For more information, contact Young Educators Society, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI 53201.

****

Magnet Schools

The Columbus (Ohio) Public Schools opened a magnet program in the 1990-91 school year for students who are interested in the teaching profession. The program is available to students beginning the eighth grade.

The program is supported by a grant from the Metropolitan Life Foundation and is a joint effort with The Ohio State University. Students admitted to the program must have at least a 2.0 grade point average. Also, the ethnic diversity of the student population is a factor in selecting participants.

Students enrolled in the magnet are exposed to a variety of teaching experiences. They also participate in tutoring students, observing in classrooms, and working with teachers in the district.

The major goal of this program is to reach students early who demonstrate an interest in the teaching profession. This effort in part addresses the teacher shortage, especially the shortage of personnel from minority groups.

Other school districts with teacher magnet schools include Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, and New York.

****

Future Educators Clubs

After examining the low number of minority students entering the teaching profession in the state of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti led an initiative to organize future educator clubs in area high schools. A preliminary planning meeting, organized by the University for selected public school representatives, led to a Fall Leadership Conference at which the concept was presented and accepted.

During the next six months, a statewide steering committee was established and approximately 40 clubs were organized in five states. In 1988 the first annual statewide Future Educator Conference was held, attracting over 300 participants. Of the students attending future educators' conferences, over 75 percent were black and at least 10 percent were Hispanic.

For more information, contact Christella Moody, Assistant to the Dean, College of Education, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197, 313/487-2035.

****

Student Recruitment

In California the state National Education Association (NEA) Student President is leading a project that focuses on the rewards of teaching. The effort is aimed at recruiting minority high school and college students who show potential for entering the field of education.

The program identifies various high schools and colleges with high minority enrollments. Then, student NEA members visit these schools and talk to students, classes, and members of existing clubs, explaining what is involved in preparing to become a teacher and how to qualify for financial aid.

The Education Association of South Carolina is addressing the teacher shortage with its Future Teachers of America program, designed to interest middle- and high-school students in teaching careers. Similar efforts have begun in North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas.

****

Peer Tutoring

Knowing and working with people who have disabilities can lead some young people to a career choice in teaching, especially in special education. One long-term recruitment strategy is to provide middle and high school students with meaningful and rewarding opportunities to relate to children and youth with special needs. Peer tutoring represents one such opportunity. The following examples include programs where peer tutoring is effective:

1. The June 1990 Resource Exchange of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) reports the use of non-handicapped high school students as peer tutors of students with handicaps by seven states. They include: Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Rhode Island, and South Dakota.

2. *Peer Tutoring: A Guide to Learning by Teaching*, by Sinclair Goodlad and Beverly Hirst, provides information on how to plan programs in which students help each other learn. Also included is information on current instructional approaches to peer tutoring. The publication builds on the premise that peer tutoring is an effective way of creating interest in teaching careers among high school students, especially if accompanied by information on potential careers. The book is available from Nichols Publishing Company, Box 96, New York, NY 10024.

3. Peer tutors in San Antonio, Texas were trained to work with all levels and ages of children with disabilities in the Northside Independent School District. The students worked as teachers' aides, assisted in parent programs, acted as counselors for weekend outings and field trips and provided respite care. The volunteers' responses to this program was extremely positive, resulting in many more requests for training than had been expected.

4. The Language Instant Relief for Teachers (LIRT) aides in the Dysart (Arizona) Unified Schools' 1986 Migrant Summer School provided teachers with assistance in tutoring students in oral language skills. Six work-study students from district high schools were assigned to visit a classroom on a regular schedule to work independently with individual students. The program focused exclusively on language arts skills for migrant students. LIRT volunteers were selected through interviews. Each volunteer constructed a library of basic language development materials for each grade level

he/she worked with. At the close of the five-week summer session, six LIRTS had helped more than 50 students who had been referred by 10 different teachers.

5. *Peer Tutoring and Other Positive Experiences to Interesting Secondary Students in Special Education Careers* is designed to interest high school students in teaching careers, particularly in special education. Available from The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, CEC, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589, 703/620-3660 or FAX 703/264-9494.

6. A 1985 conference for high school peer tutors at the University of Oregon, was held in conjunction with a statewide conference for professionals in special education. The peer tutor conference was attended by 140 students representing 21 high schools throughout the state. The purpose was to develop the professional roles, skills, and attitudes of non-handicapped tutors relative to their roles as friends, trainers, and advocates; to develop a system of reinforcers to help teachers recruit and maintain high-quality tutors; and to provide career and professional development opportunities to tutors. The two-day event was sponsored in part by an inservice training grant from the Oregon Department of Education. This early involvement of high school students could lead to increasing interest in careers in special education. For information, contact Specialized Training Program, College of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, 503/686-5311.

7. An Indianapolis, Indiana program that sponsored 13 kindergarten classes located in two high schools used 49 high school students to assist kindergarten teachers. High school students interested in early childhood education are screened before entrance into the program and work with a teacher sponsor.

****

Best Buddies of America, Inc.

Best Buddies of America, Inc., sponsored by the Kennedy Foundation, provides persons with mental retardation the opportunity to make friends with non-handicapped college students. Friendship is the crucial element in the Best Buddies program. All of the activities are designed to develop lasting friendships between participants through involvement in a variety of recreational activities or by just "being there". For more information, contact Best Buddies of America, Inc., 1350 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005.

****

Peer Helping Special Friendship Club

The Palo Alto High School of the Palo Alto (California) Unified School District started the Special Friendship Club by asking a group of 40 students from every campus clique to work with the Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMH) class on campus. A preliminary training of the Peer Helpers was held before the program was set in motion. All new club members were required to schedule individual classroom visits aimed at meeting the students who were in the program. In the training, each Peer Helper learned (1) the nature of each student's disability, (2) the educational and social goals for each EMH student, (3) how to handle everyday situations and potential problems through discussion/role play with the students, and (4) the goals for the entire program. For more information, contact Mr. James Toole, Peer Counseling Program, Palo Alto High School, Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, California, or the National Youth Leadership Council.

Appendices

A Poster Session Guidelines

B Videotapes

Appendix A

Poster Session Guidelines

****

A Poster Session is an increasingly popular graphic-oriented presentation that conveys information about a topic, with or without a presenter. With technological advances, Poster Sessions are capable of being very interactive (i.e., requiring input from the participant in order to receive maximum benefit from the available topical information). In its simplest form, a Poster Session may consist of a display poster focusing on a particular topic.

The Poster Session is a very functional way to present information as well as program descriptions. Specifically, the Poster Session is well-suited to the task of presenting information about career options in special education because all options can be presented, with or without the use of technology, and informational brochures may be included for participants to pick up as they pass by the display.

The sophistication of the Poster Session depends on the presenter, development funds, and available technology. Generally, the following factors contribute to the success of a Poster Session:

- **Appearance of Information**
  A Poster Session that has information presented concisely and legibly will be successful. If available, use a computer to generate the text and headings. A laser printer makes this task easy, and the results are always high-quality.

- **Arrangement of Information**
  Presentation of information should be in a well-planned, logical format. If the information documents research data, it would be helpful to include the steps involved in the research in addition to documenting of results. Program descriptions need to include all aspects of the program, along with the development process if that information is considered relevant.

- **Use of Materials**
  Decisions involving the selection of materials used to display the presentation are usually driven by budget considerations. However, some of the choices to be made include:
  * Selecting poster board that is sturdy enough to sustain long-term display or repeated use. Many office and art supply stores carry foamcore display panels, either in single sheets or in connected, wrap-around style. These are more expensive, but have the advantages of longevity and durability.
  * Selecting a color theme that is pleasant to view. Generally, the use of a "rainbow" of colors is not as effective as the use of a 2- or 3- color combination.

Appendix B

Videotapes

****

Videotapes have been produced by some states as effective modes of information dissemination in efforts to provide information about individuals with disabilities and to help individuals learn more about career opportunities in special education. Michigan and Florida are two such states.

To obtain a copy of either or both tapes on loan, contact Sheila Ficker, Department of Member Unit Services, CEC, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589, 703/264-9483.